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EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21 AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL: GUIDELINES TO THE SECRETARIAT FOR ORGANIZING INFORMATION PROVIDED TO GOVERNMENTS, INCLUDING INFORMATION IN THE FORM OF PERIODIC COMMUNICATIONS OR NATIONAL REPORTS AND NATIONAL AGENDA 21 ACTION PLANS REGARDING THE ACTIVITIES THEY UNDERTAKE TO IMPLEMENT AGENDA 21, THE PROBLEMS THEY FACE, SUCH AS THOSE RELATED TO FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER, AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES THEY FIND RELEVANT

Draft decision submitted by the Chairman on the basis of submissions received

1. In accordance with paragraph 3 (b) of General Assembly resolution 47/191, the Commission will consider information provided by Governments, including, for example, information in the form of periodic communications or national reports, regarding the activities they undertake to implement Agenda 21, the problems they face, such as problems related to financial resources and technology transfer, and other environment and development issues they find relevant.

2. In order to enable the Commission effectively to perform its function to review the progress in the implementation of the commitments contained in Agenda 21, including those related to the provision of financial resources and transfer of technology, Governments are encouraged to provide such information to the Secretariat.

3. Although it will be up to individual Governments to decide what specific information to provide and in what format, degree of detail and regularity, the Commission recommends that the information provided in a given year should be relevant, as far as possible, to the Agenda 21 clusters to be discussed that year under the Commission's agenda, and that it should cover the following issues:

(a) Policies and measures adopted at the national level to meet the objectives of Agenda 21, including information on national sustainable development strategies or plans and on the major activities and projects undertaken;

(b) Institutional mechanisms to address sustainable development issues, including the participation of non-governmental sectors in those mechanisms;

(c) Assessments of progress achieved, to date. These could be in the form of statistical sheets or tables;

(d) Measures taken, including targets for changing unsustainable production and consumption patterns and lifestyles, and progress achieved;

(e) Experience gained - for example, descriptions of successful policies/projects that can serve as models - and specific problems and constraints encountered, including those related to finance and technology;

(f) Assessments of capacity - i.e., availability of domestic human, technological and financial resources;

(g) Assessments of requirements for external assistance in terms of finance, technology transfer, cooperation and capacity-building and human resource development;

(h) Implementation of Agenda 21 commitments related to finance, including those related to the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of GNP for official development assistance and to the transfer of environmentally sound technology, cooperation and capacity-building;

(i) Assessments of the effectiveness of activities and projects of international organizations, including those of international financial institutions and funding mechanisms, and specific assistance that might be provided by them.

4. In order to organize the information provided by Governments, the Secretary-General is requested to prepare overview and thematic reports for future sessions of the Commission.

A. Overview report

5. The overview report of the progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 at the national level, which would take into account regional and subregional factors and the interrelationships between sectoral and cross-sectoral issues, should contain:

(a) An analysis of the main trends in the implementation of Agenda 21;

(b) An analysis of the main problems and constraints countries face in the area, including those related to finance and technology;

(c) An overview of what countries expect from the United Nations system and other multilateral organizations, including multilateral financial institutions, in the way of assistance to achieve sustainable development;

(d) A highlighting of major new initiatives and emerging sustainable development issues related to the implementation of Agenda 21 which countries may wish to bring to the attention of the Commission.

B. Thematic reports

6. The thematic reports, corresponding to the Agenda 21 clusters to be included on the agendas of forthcoming sessions of the Commission, in accordance with its multi-year programme of work, should include the following information:

(a) Progress achieved to date in implementation of the objectives of relevant chapters of Agenda 21;

(b) Main activities that countries are undertaking or planning in order to achieve those objectives;

(c) Experience gained, particularly experience from which others may benefit;

(d) Problems and constraints encountered by Governments;

(e) Assessments of the availability of domestic human, technological and financial resources and of requirements for external assistance;

(f) Specific expectations from international organizations, financial institutions and funding mechanisms.

7. Information contained in the thematic reports should be organized, as far as practicable, along the lines of paragraph 6 above.

8. To prepare the reports the Secretariat might send to Governments, at least six months prior to the Commission's sessions, questionnaires based on the above guidelines, with adjustments that may be required for the cluster to be discussed. The questionnaires should be prepared in a way that would facilitate the Governments' response and the processing of the information.

9. Governments are encouraged to submit their thematic reports and other information they may wish to bring to the attention of the Commission not less than three months prior to the relevant session.

10. In order to facilitate an integrated analysis by the Commission of progress achieved at the national, regional and international levels, the reports of the Secretary-General on the activities of intergovernmental organizations, both within and outside the United Nations system, to implement Agenda 21 (envisaged

in the draft decision under item 3 of the agenda) should be structured in such a way as to permit, to the extent possible, comparison of the data and trends therein with those in the reports on national implementation.